

OREGON PROGRESSIVE PARTY



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June 7, 2017

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Oregon Progressive Party Position on Bill at 2017 Session of Oregon Legislature:

HB 3422: Oppose (with or without -1 amendment)

Dear Committee:

The Oregon Progressive Party (OPP) on April 6 testified against this bill. This week there surfaced a proposed -1 amendment. OPP opposes this bill, with or without the -1 amendment.

Interjecting the Attorney General into the signature verification phase of petitions is not necessary and could well impair the ability of the Secretary of State to verify signatures within the time period allowed by Article IV of the Oregon Constitution.

To us, it also appears to be politically motivated. For the past 16 years, Oregon Secretaries of State (all Democrats) have erected ever more burdensome and unreasonable requirements on the petitioning process, including how signatures are verified. One result is that, while initiative signature drives in Oregon and Washington often use the same cadre of paid petitioners, the signature invalidity rate in Oregon over the past decade has been more than 3-fold higher than in Washington. In Oregon, typically 40% of the signatures are jettisoned. In Washington, the invalidity rate is often in the range of 10%.

Now that the Secretary of State is no longer a Democrat, the Oregon Legislature is considering a bill to divest the Secretary of State of his authority over signature verification.

We also note that HB 3422 is inconsistent with Article IV, Section 1(4)(a), of the Oregon Constitution, which states:

The Legislative Assembly shall provide by law for the manner in which the Secretary of State shall determine whether a petition contains the required number of signatures of qualified voters.

The Oregon Constitution does not mention the Attorney General as part of the signature verification process.

Oregon Progressive Party

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